

Pandemonium as soldiers 'kill' brothers over smuggled rice in Ogun

...Mob lynches air force officer

From Peter Moses, Abeokuta

There was pandemonium in Owode, Yewa South LGA of Ogun State when some men of the Nigerian Army reportedly shot and killed two siblings for allegedly smuggling of foreign rice.

The incident, which happened on Sunday, irked the youth of the area who blocked the Sango-Idiroko highway in protest.

The mob reportedly attacked an officer of the Nigerian Air Force, killing him in retaliation.

Our correspondent gathered that trouble started when the officers accosted the elder brother in an attempt to seize his vehicle loaded with bags of foreign parboiled rice.

A source said, "In the course of the altercation between the man and the soldiers, some people called his younger brother, popularly known as Saheed Elegusi. Saheed rushed to the scene and the two of them were shot dead by the soldiers."

"We don't know when soldiers become customs officers."

It was also gathered that the soldiers immediately fled the scene after the shooting.

The mob had set bonfires on the Sango-Idiroko highway, thereby hindering vehicular movement for hours.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Abimbola Oyeyemi, confirmed the incident.

He also hinted that the slain air force officer was in uniform when he

unknowingly ran into the mob who lynched him.

Oyeyemi said "Yes, the incident happened yesterday (Sunday). I think it was caused by an argument between them (the two brothers) and men of the Nigerian Army. We are still investigating.

"But do you know that the people killed an air force officer who was just passing on his own? He was just going on his own, he had nothing to do with the crisis. They just mobbed him and killed him because he was in uniform.

"Anyway, investigation is ongoing. The Commissioner of Police has directed the homicide section to take over the matter. The situation has been brought under control. The area is calm now.

"The DPO of Owode and some other policemen were able to move into the scene quickly. But unfortunately, the air force officer was killed."